

## DEVELOPMENT CODE

### **ARTICLE 151.15** **LANDSCAPING, WALLS, SCREENING AND BUFFERING**

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#### **Section 151.15.001**

##### **Purpose**

The Landscaping, Plant Salvage, Walls, Screening and Buffering Article is designed to provide standards for the installation of landscaping, walls and buffer areas so as to promote the general welfare of the community. This is accomplished by encouraging the creation of an attractive appearance along public streets and by screening from view those uses that may be unattractive to the public eye. Landscaping materials, including ground cover, shrubs and trees, further promote the control of erosion and the reduction of glare and dust, as well as the visual softening of building masses. Walls and screening devices allow for the separation of clashing uses and for the buffering of intensive activities. Landscaping, walls, and screening devices help to effectuate privacy, facilitate logical development, and enhance property values.

Plant salvaging promotes the conservation and use of native plants and helps maintain our sense of regional identity. Native plants, which are adapted to our climate and soils, generally become established more quickly, are hardier, and require less water than non-native plants.

#### **Section 151.15.002**

##### **General Regulations**

This Article shall apply to all new buildings and uses of land and to collector and minor, major, and principal arterial road right-of-ways, as defined by *Article 151.08.003*, adjoining residential subdivisions. It shall also apply to additions to existing buildings and uses in all zoning districts as determined by the City. This Article, with the exception of turf limitations, shall not apply to individual single family situations or uses. Developers of any residential subdivision, multi-family residential, commercial, or industrial development 1 acre or larger in size shall be required to salvage native plants.

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- A. Any proposed building or use shall be shown on the site plan required by *Article 151.18.003* indicating the location of existing and proposed buildings, parking areas, street improvements, locations, and types of landscaped areas, walls, and screening devices.
- B. Occupancy permits may be issued prior to the complete installation of all required landscaping if security equal to 110 percent of the cost of plant materials and labor, as verified by the City, is filed assuring such installation within six months after occupancy.
  - 1. Security may consist of one of the following: (1) Posting of a performance bond by a qualified surety, (2) establishing a cash trust, said fund to be deposited with the City to the credit of the developer, (3) depositing with the City a certificate of deposit issued by a banking institution authorized to issue same, or (4) filing with the City an executed contract of guarantee between the City and a trust company, banking institution, or other financial institution authorized to enter into such contracts.
  - 2. If the installation of the landscaping is not completed within the period specified above, the security may be used by the City to complete the installation. Upon completion of the installation, any portion of the remaining security deposited with the City shall be returned. The final landscape inspection shall be made prior to any security being returned. Any portions of the landscaping not installed, improperly installed, or not maintained shall cause the inspection to be postponed until the project is completed or cause the security to be used by the City.

### **Section 151.15.003**

#### **Native Plant Salvage**

##### **A. Standards of Design and Development**

- 1. Prior to site clearing or grading, developers of any residential subdivision, multi-family residential, commercial, or industrial development 1 acre or larger in size shall be required to salvage native plants (except as identified in subsection 4-3 below). Significant native plants on the site, as determined by the City, shall be salvaged. The Plant Science Center (PSC) at the University of Arizona South Campus shall provide technical assistance to the City upon request. The developer shall be encouraged to participate in determining which plants shall be salvaged on the site.

Said plants shall be transplanted or stored on the site or relocated to another site approved by the City. Upon completion of the project any stored plants may be transplanted on the site or

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relocated to another site approved by the City. The City will also permit donation of salvaged plants to the PSC, and the PSC may permit an exchange of salvaged plants with plants stored at the PSC, depending on availability and level of sponsorship.

2. During the site planning process, consideration shall be given to limiting disturbance to native plants on the site to the greatest extent possible.
3. Developers of residential and commercial subdivisions may be allowed to meet the intent of this Section through the establishment of open space to consist of a minimum of 15 percent of the site. The area shall be identified during the platting process and shall clearly be identified on the plat. Land set aside as open space in a Planned Area Development may be used to achieve both goals concurrently. Native plant salvage will not be required of commercial properties where the 15 percent open space requirement has been met.
4. The developer shall submit a written salvage plan, on forms provided by the City, outlining the method they will use to comply with this Section.
5. The City and PSC personnel will review the proposed salvage plan during the processing of commercial or industrial site plans, preliminary subdivision plats, or building permit applications, as applicable.
6. Depending on the size and nature of the site, the City shall either require that a professional salvager be hired to salvage plants or allow the developer to salvage plants, or a combination of both.
7. The PSC at the University of Arizona South Campus will make every effort to contribute their expertise to the salvage operation. If personnel are available, they will visit the site, help assess the salvage potential of the plants on the site, teach techniques, and provide consultation with the owner or developer regarding on-site care of salvaged plants. PSC personnel will also provide consultation on the re-introduction of salvaged plants to the site.
8. The City and PSC personnel will utilize the list of native plants identified in Section 151.15.003.A.11 as a guideline to determining the native plants which shall be salvaged. Such factors as plant health, plant location, plant size, plant age, type of development, access requirements, grading requirements, and other considerations will be used to determine which plants will be salvaged.
9. Salvaged plants in a healthy condition, as determined by the City, may be used to meet Code Section 151.15.004.A.6, which requires that 15 percent of commercial, multi-family residential,

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and industrial areas shall be landscaped, provided the plants are used on the site and meet the minimum size criteria for trees and shrubs as defined in this chapter. Any plant materials not surviving shall be replaced within 180 days of notice from the City to replace the plant materials.

10. Notwithstanding the requirements identified in Section 151.15.A.1 above, the following list of native plants shall be considered for salvage:

- Agaves (SPP)\*
- Cacti (SPP)
- Yucca (SPP)
- Dasylirion Wheeleri (Sotol, Desert Spoon)
- Ocotillo
- Nolina Microcarpa (Beargrass)
- Allium (Desert Onion)
- Larrea Tridentata (Creosote)
- Lycium (SPP)
- Rhus (SPP) (Sumacs)
- Prosopis (SPP) (Mesquites)
- Chilopsis Linearis (Desert Willow)
- Native grasses (site specific)
- Wildflowers (site specific)
- Seed collection (site specific)

\* SPP = species

### Section 151.15.004

#### Landscaping

##### A. Standards of Design and Development

1. All lots. Any part of the total lot area not required for buildings, structures, loading and vehicular access ways, streets, parking and utility areas, pedestrian walks, and hard surfaced activity areas shall be landscaped with trees, shrubs, and groundcover plantings and may include other inorganic materials such as aggregate. No vehicular parking shall be permitted on landscape areas. All landscape areas and material shall be maintained in a healthy, neat, clean, weed-free condition. Dead plant material on commercial sites shall be replaced within six months after notification from the City with living plant material equal to that shown on the original site plan. Plants in right-of-ways shall be warranted as per City plant warranty requirements.
  - a. Irrigation. Provision shall be made for water service to all landscaped areas requiring water, including required right-of-way landscaping adjacent to residential subdivisions. Such right-of-way landscaping shall be irrigated according to the irrigation specification standards provided by the City.

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- b. Irrigation Site Plan. A diagrammatic irrigation site plan shall be submitted indicating the locations of main and lateral irrigation lines and any necessary sleeving.
- c. Irrigation Compatibility. The City shall require that irrigation system installation in the public right-of-way is compatible with and is planned for future extensions and expansions of irrigation systems that will be interconnected. Compatible fixtures shall include, but not be limited to meters, controllers, valves, piping, and electrical service and metering.
- d. Shrubs. All shrubs shall be a minimum of 5 gallon size.
- e. Plant Materials. Plant material composition shall be as per the list in Section 151.15.007 or other plant list provided by the City.
- f. Turf Limitations. Turf includes lawns and grassy areas which are kept mowed. The following restrictions apply:
  - (1) The use of turf is prohibited in governmental, commercial, and industrial development, except for specific circumstances as allowed by the City.
  - (2) Use of turf in multi-family residential development is limited to 10 percent of the landscape area.
  - (3) Use of turf may be authorized as an element of a Planned Area Development or Specific Plan but shall not exceed 10 percent of the landscape area (excluding open space areas).
  - (4) The use of turf is limited to areas that benefit the residents, e.g., park-like areas.
- 2. Use of turf in new single-family residential development shall be limited to rear yard areas only.
- 3. Turf type used shall be limited to low-water-use species only (See *Section 151.15.007 Low Water Use, Drought Tolerant Plant List* or see other plant list provided by the City), except as exempted in *Section 151.16.003.A.1*.
- 4. Street frontages. Landscaping shall be established along the street frontages in the area lying between the public sidewalk and any buildings, parking areas, loading areas, or actual storage areas on the property except for necessary driveways. Landscaping shall also be established in the right-of-way adjacent to collector and minor, major and principal streets adjoining residential subdivisions.
  - a. An area that averages 10 feet of landscaping shall be located between the back of sidewalk or curb line and any parking area.

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- b. Street Trees -- Commercial. Landscaping in front and exterior side yards shall include trees at a rate not less than one tree for each 50 feet of street frontage. Trees may be clustered, if appropriate to the site and to the landscape plan proposed. Any lot with less than 50 feet of frontage shall provide one tree. These trees are to be located outside of the street right-of-way except in cases where there is a designated planting strip between the back of the curb and the sidewalk in the right-of-way, and spaced as specified in subparagraph 3e below. This requirement shall also apply to private streets within commercial zoning districts. Landscaping may extend into the street right-of-way provided a written agreement has been recorded between the City and the developer stating that the owner is responsible for all maintenance in perpetuity and that the City is held harmless.
  - c. Street Trees -- Residential. Street trees are required on the exterior boundaries of residential subdivisions along collector and arterial roadways. An average of one tree per 50 feet of frontage is required unless site conditions make this standard infeasible. Additional landscape requirements shall be as defined by the City and shall be based on the nature of the site, to include available right-of-way width and slope considerations, sidewalk location, utility locations, and the extent of existing native vegetation.
5. Trees. Street trees shall be required along all arterial and collector streets in accordance with the following standards:
- a. Minimum Size. Street trees shall be a minimum of 15 gallon size, and, for right-of-way areas, shall meet Arizona Nursery Association Average Tree Specifications.
  - b. Planting Detail. All trees shall be planted and staked in accordance with best management practices and the provisions of the City.
  - c. Recommended Lists. Street trees to be planted may be chosen from the recommended list of trees in *Section 151.15.007* or other plant list provided by the City. Approval for the planting of alternate species may be given by the City upon demonstration that the plant is low-water use and drought tolerant.
  - d. Spacing. All street tree spacing shall be made subject to the following provisions or as limited by the clear vision area requirements of *Section 151.04.009*.
    - (1) Trees shall not be planted closer than 25 feet from the curb line of any intersection of streets or alleys, or closer than 5 feet from private driveways, fire hydrants, or utility poles and must be located outside of clear vision areas as defined by *Section 151.04.009*.
    - (2) Street trees shall not be planted closer than 20 feet to any light standards.
    - (3) Street trees shall not be planted closer than 5 feet from the face of the curb.

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- (4) Where there are overhead power lines, street tree species are to be chosen that will not interfere with those lines.
  - (5) Street trees shall not be planted within 5 feet of any permanent hard surface paving or walkway. Space between the tree and such hard surface may be covered by non-permanent hard surfaces such as grates, bricks or sand, paver blocks, cobblestones, etc.
  - (6) Commercial and industrial site street trees, as they mature, shall be gradually pruned to provide at least 8 feet of clearance above sidewalks and 12 feet above street roadway surfaces.
6. Multi-Family Areas. Common area landscaping and amenities shall be installed prior to issuance of any occupancy permits in a MFR, MHP, or RV Residential District, or as provided in Section 151.15.002,B.
7. Residential Subdivisions. Landscaping shall be established in the right-of-way adjacent to collector and minor, major, and principal arterial streets adjoining residential subdivisions. Such landscaping shall meet the requirements of this Section and other specifications of the City for spacing, size, and type.
8. Commercial, Multi-Family Residential and Industrial Areas.
- a. In commercial, multi-family residential, and industrial districts, there shall be required a minimum 15 percent of the lot area to be landscaped with a variety of plant types and sizes and other features. This shall be in addition to the required street trees.
  - b. Street frontage landscaping (151.15.003,A,2) and curbed planters in parking lot interiors (151.15.003,A,7) are still required, but can be counted as part of the 15 percent landscaped area.
  - c. All landscaping shall consist of low-water use, drought-tolerant, plants. Plants chosen from the list in *Section 151.15.007* will satisfy the drought tolerant requirement. Alternative plant species will be considered during the site plan review process and may be utilized if approved by the City.
  - d. In lieu of these standards, and at owner's option, the owner may prepare a detailed plan and specifications for landscaping and other features. Such plan and specifications shall be submitted to the Committee for review.

**Maximum Bay Sizes.** Parking areas shall be divided into bays of not more than 12 parking spaces. Between or at the end of each parking bay there shall be curbed planters of at least 10 feet by 17 feet in length. Each planter shall contain one major tree, at a minimum size of 15 gallons, and ground cover.

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- e. The front of a vehicle may encroach upon any interior landscaped area when said area is at least 3½ feet in depth per abutting parking space and protected by wheel stops or curbing. Two feet of said landscaped area may be part of the required depth of each abutting parking space.

### B. Plant Material Composition.

Plant material (trees and shrubbery) composition shall not exceed 20 percent of the same genus/species as a percent of the total number of trees and shrubbery indicated on the site plan, with the exception of street right-of-way plantings as approved by the City. The composition totals for trees and shrubbery shall be considered separately. The 20 percent genus/species limitation may be exceeded if the species is represented by different subspecies. Modification to this limitation may be addressed during the site plan review process.

### C. Maintenance.

1. Landscaped areas on private property shall be reasonably maintained by the owner or the lessee of the property as to pruning, trimming, watering, or other requirements to create an attractive and safe appearance for the development. Landscaping on public right-of-ways adjacent to residential subdivisions will be maintained by the City upon acceptance of all off-site improvements.
2. Any plant materials not surviving shall be replaced within 180 days of notice from the City to replace the plant materials.
3. Lack of maintenance shall constitute a violation of the Development Code.
4. This maintenance requirement shall extend to the planter strip adjacent to the project for commercial development, but not to any median.

## **Section 151.15.005**

### **Walls and Screening Devices**

#### A. Standards of Design and Development.

1. All outdoor permanent storage areas located in a side or rear yard for materials, trash, mechanical equipment, vehicles, or other similar items shall be screened from view from the public street by a minimum 6-foot high wall constructed of or finished with materials which meet the approval of the City.
2. Roof mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened by parapet walls or other screening devices to be no lower in height than 6 inches below the height of the mechanical equipment on side, front, or rear walls, whichever area is adjacent to a public street, residential district, or use.



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- a. Industrial lots not adjacent to an arterial street shall be screened by the use of walls, berms, landscaping or any combination of the three.
  - b. All other areas shall be screened by the use of walls, berms, or a combination of the two. Such screening may be supplemented by up to 25 percent intermittent landscaping.
3. A brick, slump block, or masonry wall with stucco or mortar wash finish, or compatible alternatives approved by the City, shall be constructed on a site used for multi-family, commercial, or industrial use along any lot lines in common with, or separated only by, an alley from:
- a. A single-family residence, except a non-conforming single-family residence located in a commercial or industrial zoning district.
  - b. A single-family residential zoning district.
  - c. A multi-family residential development, except a non-conforming multi-family development, located in a commercial or industrial zoning district.
  - d. A multi-family residential zoning district.
  - e. Any building operated by federal, state, county or city government and not situated in either a commercial or industrial zoning district.
  - f. Any school building and playground, except those located in either a commercial or industrial zoning district.

Such walls shall be 6 feet in height, except that the first 25 feet in from the street and property lines will be stepped down to a maximum height of 3 feet.

- 4. Walls shall be required along the rear of reverse frontage lots with a height of 6 feet. Such walls shall be of slump block or masonry construction with stucco or mortar wash finish, or compatible alternatives approved by the City. Street trees and landscaping materials shall be required between the wall and curb.
- 5. Exterior boundaries of mobile home and trailer parks shall be provided with a masonry or wooden wall having a height of 6 feet and designed to create an attractive border.
- 6. Any permanent type improvements, with the exception of landscaping, within the public right-of-way, will require a right-of-way permit and City approval before installation. No walls of any type or height will be allowed in a public right-of-way, except retaining walls as determined necessary and approved by the City,

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### Section 151.15.006

#### **Buffering and Screening Requirements**

- A. General Provisions. To reduce the impacts on adjacent uses which are different type buffers and screening will be required. The property owner is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of screening in accordance with the requirements of this Section unless the abutting use has already provided said buffering in compliance with the standards of this Section.
- B. Buffering/Screening Requirements.
1. In lieu of the shown standards, and at the owner's option, the owner may prepare a detailed plan and specifications for landscaping and screening including plantings, fences, walls, walks, and other features designed to afford the degree of desired buffering. Such plan and specifications shall be submitted to the City for review.
  2. A buffer consists of a horizontal distance from the main building(s) of proposed use to the property line of an adjacent district which may be occupied by screening, utilities, and landscaping materials. The required buffering distance between various land uses and adjacent districts is identified in Table 151.15-5.
  3. The yard setback requirements of each district may be included in the buffer distance.
  4. Within the buffer areas, screening may be required and may consist of any of the following:

At least one row of deciduous or evergreen trees or a mixture of each and spaced between 15 and 20 feet (on center), dependent on species, and at least one row of evergreen shrubs spaced not more than 4 feet apart (on center) which will grow to form a continuous hedge at least 5 feet in height within three years of planting. The balance of the buffer area shall consist of low growing evergreen shrubs, evergreen ground cover or vegetable or rock mulch.
  5. For those buffer distances which are 40 feet or greater, 25 percent of the required distance immediately adjacent to the affected use shall be landscaped and screened as herein provided. The remainder of the buffer distances may be occupied by additional landscaping or screening, utilities, and parking facilities, but not by main or accessory buildings, except that carports may occupy a portion of this buffer distance. In no case shall the carports be located closer than 20 feet from the adjacent use.
- C. The planting of plant types which are considered allergenic is discouraged.

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**Table 151.15-5**  
**MINIMUM BUFFER DISTANCES<sup>1</sup>**  
**(The more intense use provides the buffer)**

Zoning District of Proposed Use	Abutting Zoning District or Conforming Use													Right-of-Way	
	OS/PF	UR-SFR	MFR-1	MHR	RV	NC	LC	OP	GC	IP	AI	LI	HI	Arterial Street	Collector Street
Open Space and Public Facilities (OS/PF)	0	60	60	60	60	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	40	40
Single Family Residential (UR-SFR)	0 <sup>4</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	--- <sup>3</sup>	100	300	30	25
Mobile Home Residential Subdivision (MHR)	0 <sup>4</sup>	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	--- <sup>3</sup>	100	300	30	25
Multi-Family Residential (MFR)	0 <sup>4</sup>	25 <sup>2</sup>	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	--- <sup>3</sup>	0	0	30	25
Recreational Vehicle or Mobile Home Park(RV)	0 <sup>4</sup>	40	40	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	--- <sup>3</sup>	0	0	30	25
Neighborhood Convenience (NC)	60 <sup>4</sup>	40	40	40	40	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	0	0
Limited Commercial (LC)	60 <sup>4</sup>	40	40	40	40	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	0	0
Office Professional (OP)	60 <sup>4</sup>	40	40	40	40	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	0	0
General Commercial (GC)	60 <sup>4</sup>	60	60	60	60	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	0	0
Industrial Park (IP)	60 <sup>4</sup>	100	100	100	100	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	30	20
Airport Industrial (AI)	100 <sup>4</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	30	20
Light Industrial (LI)	100 <sup>4</sup>	100	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	30	20
Heavy Industrial (HI)	100 <sup>4</sup>	300	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	--- <sup>3</sup>	30	20

<sup>1</sup> All distances are given in feet and are measured from the main building of a proposed use to the property line of the adjacent district.

The distances are the minimum required and a greater distance may be required by the pertinent section of the code.

<sup>2</sup> The MFR-2 proposed development is to be setback 40 feet from any SFR zoning district.

<sup>3</sup> Buffer to be determined based on Council Approved Agreement with the developer.

<sup>4</sup> Buffer adjacent to wash will be based on the Surface Water Plan and floodplain considerations.

**Section 151.15.007**

**Recommended Plant List for the City of Sierra Vista**

Reference the City of Sierra Vista website at [www.SierraVistaAz.gov](http://www.SierraVistaAz.gov) (found in Government/Community Development/Planning).